BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

Lingohack

5 December 2018

The story…

Underwater sound pollution

Learn language related to…

Sound

Need-to-know language

listening in on something – secretly listening to something

picking up sounds – noticing or detecting sounds

ruptured – broken, burst or torn

eardrum – skin in the ear that vibrates when sound reaches it, allowing you to hear

swamping – arriving in too great an amount to be dealt with

Answer this…

What effect can sound have on whales and dolphins?

Watch the video online
http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/features/lingohack/ep-181205

Transcript

Listening in on life underwater.

This small device is **picking up sounds** we rarely get to hear - and it's helping scientists establish how too much noise is stressing out ocean wildlife.

Professor Steve Simpson, marine biologist
Whales and dolphins, we know have very sensitive hearing and we know that sound causes stress. It affects their migration behaviour. It affects their reproductive behaviour. We've then looked at fish. Fish also have ears and are affected by noise.

Today we joined Professor Steve Simpson, a marine biologist who's dedicated much of his time to studying and collecting sounds from the sea.

Professor Steve Simpson, marine biologist
So, very close to loud sources of noise, we see animals with **ruptured eardrums** - so whales and dolphins. We see fish with their swim bladders burst because of the noise.

Offshore construction and busy shipping lanes are interfering with the way marine life communicates.

Professor Steve Simpson, marine biologist
That is really loud, isn't it? I mean, that's totally **swamping** anything out. If you were trying to communicate, if you were a dolphin in the area, or you were a fish, then you wouldn't get yourself heard over the noise of that boat.

Solving the problem of plastic pollution in our oceans will take many years.

But when it comes to noise pollution, Steve says it can be reversed.

Did you get it?
What effect can sound have on whales and dolphins?

Sound can cause them stress and affect their migration and reproductive behaviours.

Did you know?
Sound waves travel at approximately 343 metres per second in air at room temperature. In water sound is 4.3 times faster and goes further, travelling at around 1,484 metres per second.